

ALABAMA STATE COMMUNITY RECOVERY TASK FORCES
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING
JULY 20, 2011 1:30 P.M.

Those in attendance were:

Jessica Dent, ADECA

Mary Shell, Alabama Historical Commission

Emily Williams, HUD

Victoria Salinas, FEMA LTR

Art Pierce, Al Assoc of Habitat Affiliates

Liz Cochran, ADECA

Jeremiah Christopher, FEMA LTR

Shea Christilaw, FEMA LTR

Teresa Lewis, City of Tuscaloosa

Scott Burgess, FEMA LTR

Kristin Gardner, The Jones Group LLC

Paul McLondon, Volunteers of America

Henry Nelson, HUD

Steve Wade, FEMA LTR

Doug Freeland, AIDT

Jeff Pruitt, Top of Al Regional Council of Governments

Joey Hester, North Central Ala Council of Governments

LaDonnah Roberts, City of Tuscaloosa

Jose Gil Montanez, FEMA LTR

Diann Hodgson, FEMA LTR

Jessica Dent, ADECA welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone should have received an email with an agenda and the action items for today's meeting. In the email you were asked to bring copies of any assessments that your organization may have already completed; those will be collected later in the meeting.

Review of Action items from last meeting:

1. Communication - We are still in the process of getting the information sheets on every organization, once we have this we will forward it to each of the members of this committee. The website is in the development stage the plan is to list each organization and the contact name; the listing will not be include contact information (telephone number or email address) on the website. If you do not want to be listed on the website let her know.
2. Compile resource of laws, regulations, codes, processes, etc. applicable to rebuilding and recovery – include building, energy, historical, environmental, floodplain, mitigation, etc. (Ask Housing RSF/RTF where they are on this issue.)

Cordova has received a report from the Structural Engineers outlining what buildings can be torn down. The City needs guidance on who to contact about tearing down the buildings. A form is needed that lists the contact information concerning the demolition of buildings. The Alabama Building Commission, the Alabama League of Municipalities and the Alabama Planning Institute at the University of North Alabama are contacts that may be able to provide this information. Structural building plans have to be submitted to local planning commissions, but most small towns do not want zoning or have the ability to staff a zoning board and an appeals board. There are only three counties in the State that have zoning in unincorporated areas. This may be a problem if the communities get a grant. We need to keep in mind to look at Zoning Subdivision regulations when doing building and design. They need to include provisions for emergency services – example: have more than one way in and out of an area).

Best Practices: Looking for ways to make it good. Need to be sure we are not just building back; we are building back better and stronger. Zoning can be unique for each city. Flood plain and floodway issues - the authority is there for counties to do zoning in the flood plains.

Discussion of Community Assessments:

HUD representatives reported that In the Katrina Repair SSBG assessment they identified residents with title issues, financial issues and issues with home sites along with medical center problems. They are doing assessments for housing and a marketing study. This will be a resource for Community Development and Community Revitalization.

Habitat for Humanity reported that they have assessments on the local level. They assist 50% median income levels and below. They are talking with local leaders to obtain information that will identify those who qualify for the program. At this time they are in the process of planning to do 26 projects in Birmingham, 45 in Hackleburg and Tuscaloosa. The Disaster Corporate Arm is looking for ways to find the families in need and identify their finances. A source of this information is the Alabama Department of Senior Citizens Services; ADECA has 21 agencies that are currently doing community action and the State and Regional offices of VOA.

EDA has requested pre and post disaster assessments the RPC;s may have for the communities. Some of the information will not be ready until October. Hazard and Mitigation Plans for local EMA's are another source of pre disaster assessments.

Capacity planning plan – small towns may find it difficult to fill the positions necessary to have Planning and Zoning. Finding enough qualified people needed to serve on the Zoning Board and the Board of Adjustments can be an issue with leadership development. Auburn University is looking at a fast track program to help with this issue. We have an RSF who is looking at what it will take to implement and manage projects. This could lead to training opportunities. The RPC's know if some of the cities can handle the projects that could come out of this process.

Liz Cochran, ADECA - we are we looking at energy assessments, and at the energy star portfolio that encourages people to build back green. Energy audits have been done on school systems; we need to do assessments on school systems that are at risk. There are education courses in energy efficiency at the University of Alabama. AIDT provides training opportunities for industries, ATN may be a source for training in other areas, possibly Green building and energy training in their contractor training classes. A class on retrofitting buildings to be energy efficient and ADA Compliant may be something we want to look into. We want to build low income housing that is energy efficient and sustainable.

Teresa Lewis, City of Tuscaloosa reported that the two year college system has a program called the Alabama E3 Strategy that promotes efficiency in industry. Another group we need to target is realtors and appraisers involved in the process; they can help us work on the future assessed values.

Healthy Homes – Heshmat Aglani, Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Tuskegee University has build energy efficient affordable housing. We may want to contact him about assisting us with the CPCB.

ADECA will be having a “green focus” expo in September, they will have green information. We may want to look into becoming a vendor, try to get speakers and educational materials to hand out. Be sure to have residential and small business owners involved. We need to target low income and Senior Citizens with weatherization issues.

Huntsville will host a Green U at the Botanical Gardens on August 27.

Alabama Communities of Excellence does health, education, visual, business and industrial assessments on the communities in their group.

Phil Campbell is working with NWACOG to help them with their recovery efforts.

At this time Jose Gil Montanez explained assessments and how they are completed.

NEEDED FUNCTIONS:

- Budgets – Capital Improvement Plans – Physical Capital – Resource Mobilization
- Leadership – ROI – clear job descriptions/tasks/visioning – stimulating community involvement
- Environmental/Historical Preservation
- IT capacity/Communications – Public Outreach
- Health- proximity to health facilities
- Education – Energy Efficiency
- Human Resources Coordination
- Economic & Community Development
- Rules & Regulations – Interpretation & Awareness – Tax Increments* – (creating a TIFF), Revenue Policies, Grant writing, grant management & recovery
- Emergency Management Planning – LTCT
- Zoning – Regional Planning Commissions
- Equipment & Facilities
- Transportation/Transit/Bike & Pedestrian
- Public/Private partnership/Foundations
- Mitigation
- Coalitions

*Tax Increments has to do with using the value of the property in an area before and after improvements are made to obtain funding for projects. This is also referred to at TIFF. Need to check with the Alabama Department of Revenue – Economic development.

Sustainable Communities Grant, issued through HUD— the deadline for applying for these grants has a quick turn around and the applicant may not get it the first time. East Alabama is a recipient of one of these. It is recommended that the Regional Council or a University/Consortium be involved with this.

We need to get this information out to the local area and get them involved, once this document is established we will schedule a training session with the local community leaders and volunteers to explain how we are going to do the assessments. Then we will go out into the community and complete them. The next two to three weeks we need to put “boots on the ground”. Everyone needs to look at their schedule to see if they can participate in the process. Our goal is to do this the first week of August. We need to see what role the RPC’s want to have in this process. We need to be sure that the State and RPC’s are working together.

EDA Capacity Building provides funding to the RPC’s in the affected area and the funds are earmarked for technical assistance & grant writing.

Timetable for assessments: Monday/Tuesday – draft assessment document sent out/return to Jose Gil Montanez in two to three weeks. We are bringing all the RSF’s to work together on the Best Practices and Funding Available for the next meeting.

Any ideas we have we need to send them in. Any Action Items activity from previous meetings needs to be sent in this week.

Action Items:

- Need to check with Faith Based/Non Profits to see if they have any assessments on the affected communities.
- Get with the Regional Planning Commissions to see what they are willing to do.
- Find out about Building Codes – contact Alabama Building Commission or Lavonne Gatlin, Interim director, Alabama Planning Institute at the University of North Alabama.
- Education focus on trying to include energy/rehab/ADA information to the construction industry.

Our next meeting – first week in August as a conference call to check in on what we have done.

Submitted:

Diann Hodgson